

# FAULKNER STUDIES

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## A Short View of Faulkner's *Sanctuary*

WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

When asked whether Popeye, the vicious gangster, had any "human prototype" Faulkner answered, "No, he was symbolical of evil. I just gave him two eyes, a nose, a mouth, and a black suit. It was all allegory." Although the story is not uncharacteristic of much else in Faulkner's fictional world, Faulkner did, it would seem, consider newspaper stories which featured Popeye Pumphrey, a Memphis racketeer, elaborating them for his own artistic purposes. Horace Benbow, after talking with Temple Drake in Miss Reba's cathouse, where Popeye has taken her after the rape with the corn cob, thinks this to himself as he walks down a Memphis street:

Better for her if she were dead tonight, Horace thought, walking on. For me, too. He thought of her, Popeye, the woman [Ruby Goodwin, Lee Goodwin's commonlaw wife], the child, Goodwin, all put into a single chamber, bare, lethal, immediate and profound: a single blotting instant between the indignation and the surprise. And I too; thinking how that were the only solution. . . . Removed, cauterised out of the old and tragic flank of the world.

There is only a thin margin of decency possible in such a world, and the only intelligent attitudes are the pessimistic calm of Ruby Goodwin and the fatalistic commiseration and kindness of Horace. Horace Benbow is the only one in the Christian community of Jefferson who tries to help Goodwin, falsely charged for the murder of Tommy, the poor half-wit whom Popeye had shot when he tried to help Temple. (In this story, as in many others, Faulkner is hard on Baptist righteousness.) Miss Jenny, the ninety-year-old aunt who appears first in *Sartoris*, and who appears here as cynical but calm and broadminded, says, "You won't ever catch up with injustice, Horace."

Clarence Snopes, the Mississippi state senator, is sheer opportunist, willing to sell information to Horace or to Temple's father, Judge Drake, whichever is the more profitable to him.

And the District Attorney, Eustace Graham, like most of the politicians in Faulkner, manipulates human beings strictly for his own advantage as a vote-getter. He invites the lynching of Goodwin merely because it is convenient for him to sway the jury by appealing to their basest prejudices: "You have just heard the testimony of the chemist and the gynecologist—who says that this is no longer a matter for the hangman, but for a bonfire of gasoline." Narcissa, Horace's sister and the widow of Bayard Sartoris, and the other righteous Baptist ladies force Ruby and her ill child to leave Horace's house and later the hotel. Gowan Stevens, Narcissa's twenty-five-year-old suitor, is described as a plumpish irresponsible young man with a swaggering air. He indulges in alcoholic orgies, occasionally remembering that University of Virginia men should be able to hold their liquor. After one of these orgies he leaves Temple Drake to the mercies of Popeye and his colleagues in crime at the Goodwin place in Frenchman's Bend. The students at the University are uniformly without manners or consideration for their elders or each other. Horace's wife, whom he had taken from another man, is unfaithful to him.

The evil in *Sanctuary* is of two sorts, that inherent in the human creature, and that owed to modern mechanism and to our having lost an easy relationship with nature, the woods, the birds, the seasons. The evil inherent in human nature, in "the tragic flank of the world," is caught in part by an almost casual pattern of nature or flower imagery, the heaven-tree, the grape, and the honeysuckle; the evils of a mechanized, vulgar, meretricious world inhabited by most of the characters are caught by images that are metallic and dehumanized.

The heaven-tree stands at the corner of the jailyard where Lee Goodwin and a Negro wife murderer are imprisoned. The Negro sings mournful spirituals while awaiting his death by hanging, and he complains that he should not be hanged because

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he is the "bes ba'ytone singer in nawth Mississippi." Goodwin is afraid to say that Popeye killed Tommy because Popeye would have him killed, probably by a shot through the jail window. The heaven-tree is an ironical symbol of the melancholy and despair of the two prisoners. The Negro's voice could be heard in the evenings "coming out of the high darkness where the ragged shadow of the heaven-tree which snooded the street lamp at the corner fretted and mourned." At one point the blossoms are described thus: "The last trumpet shaped bloom had fallen . . . they lay thick, viscid underfoot, sweet and over-sweet in the nostrils with a sweetness surfeitive and moribund, and at night now the ragged shadows of full fledged leaves pulsed upon the barred window in the shabby rise and fall." Many of the words used in the description relate to the two men in the jail and to the story as a whole: *trumpet shaped* suggests Judgment Day; *thick, viscid, surfeitive, and fallen*, their soon-to-decaying bodies; and *shabby*, their hopelessness and the cheap and dishonest motives of many involved in their fates.

Not even Horace, the one good man in the story, is free from evil. Grape and honeysuckle become involved in his repressed or half-conscious preoccupation with the body of Little Belle, his stepdaughter. Her "voice would be like the murmur of the wild grape itself." Little Belle, self-centered and quite capable of dissimulation, was a part of the "conspiracy between female flesh and female season," the spring. Again, "He was thinking of the grape arbor . . . darkening into the pale whisper of her white dress, of the delicate and urgent mammalian whisper of that curious small flesh which he had not begot and in which appeared to be vatted delicately some seething sympathy with the blossoming grape." Later the grape imagery recedes before Horace's awareness of the smell of honeysuckle, which in *The Sound and the Fury*, as here, becomes identified with the sweetness, richness and evil powers of sex: Walking to his home shortly after hearing Temple tell of her rape at Frenchman's Bend Horace smells honeysuckle . . . "He opened the door and felt his way into the room and to the light. The voice of the night—insects, whatever it was— had followed him into the house; he knew suddenly that it was the friction of the earth on its axis, approaching the moment when it must decide to turn on or to remain forever still: a motionless ball in cooling space, across which a thick smell of honeysuckle writhed like cold smoke." Later he sees Little Belle's picture on the dresser in his room. As he studies the face, he sees her enveloped in "slow, smoke-like

tongues of invisible honeysuckle. Almost palpable enough to be seen, the scent filled the room and the small face seemed to swoon in a voluptuous languor. . . ." His excitement increases as the images in his fantasy change and he sees her carried on a roaring train through a dark tunnel, the shucks whispering madly beneath her, as they had beneath Temple. Then he realizes that he has identified Little Belle with Temple, that she is involved in a world "across which a thick smell of honeysuckle writhes like cold smoke." What has happened to Temple might happen to her.

The second, more persistently developed pattern of imagery, is that of an urbanized, metallic, inhuman existence. The historical origins of this existence are not explored. It is merely accepted as a form of evil superimposed on the evil inherent in the human condition "on a motionless ball in cooling space." Popeye has eyes like "two knobs of soft black rubber," his face is like "the face of a wax doll set too near the fire and forgotten," his fingers are like steel "but cold and light as aluminum," and he has that "vicious depthless quality of stamped tin." His hat is "all angles, like a modernistic lampshade." Popeye is afraid of the woods and uneasy with or frightened by the sounds or the quietness of the countryside. But it is not merely Popeye, born a syphilitic and pervert, who is inhuman. The people in the world around him are depersonalized or inhuman in some degree. The people in Jefferson who listen to the old simple ballads "of bereavement and retribution and repentance" hear them "metallically sung, blurred, emphasized by static or needle-disembodied voices blaring from imitation wood cabinets or pebble grain horn mouths. . . ." The blind father of Goodwin, with eyes like "phlegm clots" or "dirty yellowish clay marbles," seems an almost wraithlike symbol of the unseeing or amoral world, whether of Popeye, Narcissa, or Clarence. Eyes are frequently described in *Sanctuary* but never as warmly or decently human. When Lee Goodwin takes a coat from Temple in a semi-darkened room their eyes are described thus: "Her eyes were quite wide, almost black, the lamp light on her face and two tiny reflections of his face in her pupils like peas in two inkwells." The doctor who attends Temple at Miss Reba's has eyes "like little bicycle wheels at dizzy speed; a metallic hazel." Coed acquaintances of Temple are once seen studying one of their group with "eyes like knives."

The descriptions of Temple are done in terms appropriate to her. Temple's speech is "parrot-like," and on one occasion



her grimace is like "porcelain." The passage in which she is seen in court picks up earlier descriptions and develops them into this image of her:

From beneath her black hat her hair escaped in tight red curls like clots of resin. The hat bore a rhinestone ornament. Upon her black satin lap lay a platinum bag. . . . Above the ranked intent faces white and pallid as the floating bellies of dead fish, she sat in an attitude at once detached and cringing. . . . Her face was quite pale, the two spots of rouge like paper discs pasted on her cheek bones, her mouth painted into a savage and perfect bow, also like something both symbolical and cryptic cut carefully from purple paper and pasted there.

But the tinny, cheap, debauched and vulgar world of Popeye and Temple is not restricted to their talk or dress or manners, it is a part of the very landscape they *see*. During their trip to Memphis they experience "a bright, soft day, a wanton morning filled with that unbelievable soft radiance of May, rife with a promise of noon and of heat, with high fat clouds like gobs of whipped cream floating lightly as reflections in a mirror, their shadows scudding sedately across the road."

Incidental descriptions of other characters, such as Snopes, Judge Drake and even Miss Reba, extend this pattern of imagery and metaphor. Snopes is called the pie-faced man, or in more detail is described as having a "face like a pie took out of the oven too soon." Even Snopes' sartorial effects and dress are related to a mechanical order: "the whole man with his shaved neck and pressed clothes and gleaming shoes emanated somehow the idea that he had been dry-cleaned rather than washed." Several times Judge Drake's mustache is referred to as hammered silver—"like a bar of hammered silver against his dark skin." Miss Reba's cheap jewelry and beer tankard are described in terms that suggest a vulgar metallic world. Finally, even the coeds are seen as having "painted small faces and scant bright dresses like identical artificial flowers."

These patterns of imagery suggest that Faulkner gave this novel closer attention in the writing than is sometimes assumed. It is episodic, sometimes introducing generally irrelevant scenes like the affairs of Fonzo and Virgil Snopes or the beer guzzling of Uncle Bud, and much of the irony is too pat—but the mood and tone are generally uniform. A part of this mood or tone emanates from the highly connotative language that Faulkner on occasion employs. The words quoted above, used to describe the blossoms of the heaven-tree, suggest the method, the way, in

which a word catches a specific or concrete detail and rises as an overtone, relating itself to a larger situation or even to the whole story.

Faulkner is willing to employ such connotations consciously. He is even willing to coin terms or to force connotations by using words, not obviously metaphorical, which require careful interpretation. The following passage, concerned with Temple's first experience of Miss Reba's cathouse, has been criticized as an example of careless diction, wilful ambiguities and preciousness:

The narrow stairwell turned back upon itself in a succession of *niggard* reaches. The light, falling through a thickly curtained door at the front and through a shuttering window at the rear of each stage, had a weary quality. A spent quality: *defunctive*, exhausted—a protracted weariness like a vitiated backwater beyond sunlight and the *vivid noises* of sunlight and day. There was a *defunctive* odor of irregular food, *vaguely alcoholic*, and Temple even in her ignorance seemed to be surrounded by a *ghostly promiscuity of intimate garments*, of discreet whispers of flesh stale and oft-assailed and *impregnable* behind each silent door which they passed.

The underscored words and phrases are those objected to as evidence that Faulkner lays about him like "a bright sophomore." Yet if read with something like the attention one gives to poetry each of the expressions is readily understandable: *niggard* suggests short and cramped, with the connotations of meanness and miserableness; *defunctive* describes a light that is gray, used-up, almost dead; *vivid noises* is an example of synaesthesia, an adjective usually restricted to things seen being applied to sound; *vaguely alcoholic* plainly suggests that gin or whiskey was a part of the meal and the odor of it lingers; in the phrase, *ghostly promiscuity of intimate garments*, *ghostly* implies the recent or former presence of the women and *promiscuity* applied to *garments* is patently a transferred epithet; no real difficulty arises with *impregnable* if one recognizes that it means not physical but spiritual impregnability, the irony of so much physical union without love.

The cathouse, incidentally, is a good symbol of the world Faulkner is castigating, a world in which money and self-interest preclude or destroy affection or love, and a world in which sex writhes "like cold smoke." In *Sanctuary* the former is developed in part through the imagery of the brassy, the metallic, the inhuman; and the latter through the imagery of the grape and honeysuckle. Probably *Sanctuary* is overwritten, seeming unreal



in the way an expressionistic play, which pushes too hard against its symbols, seems unreal, and without doubt it is extremely melodramatic, but the essential truth it contains, realized in shocking scenes and through a highly wrought idiom, is clearly implied. As a novel it is far above the level of "potboiler," the term Faulkner himself applied to it.

## IDEAS AND QUERIES

Two interesting letters were received this quarter from Thomas L. Jeltrup at The Seven Bookhunters, Station O, Box 22, New York 11. Mr. Jeltrup's first letter should be quoted in its entirety:

"Since *Faulkner Studies* is obviously a quarterly written by and for critics, and since the layman can no more be expected to learn and understand the mysteries of modern criticism than he can be expected to learn and understand the calculus of finite differences, may I make the suggestion that *Ideas and Queries* be that section which is reserved for the general reader and the non-professional Faulkner fan? May I further suggest that the literary critic, practicing and incipient, be rigorously excluded from this column, and that this column be opened only to the most exoteric and elementary questions and opinions? I do believe that it would be possible to run this section for the general reader, and I do believe that it would be possible to make it interesting without once having to use the words 'Myth,' 'Tensions,' and 'Form and Content,' to say nothing of 'Ritual' and 'Rhythmic Patterns.'

"As a starter—which you may or may not want to publish: What is the meaning of Snopes' infernal adventure in *The Hamlet*? What is the purpose of the fish motif in *As I Lay Dying*? Can not an enterprising young journalism student do a little research in Memphis and give us a factual and non-bowdlerized account of the crime which suggested *Sanctuary*? Has anybody noticed the striking resemblance of the novels of Thomas Love Peacock to *Mosquitoes*—or the humor of the opening section of Irving's *Knickerbocker History of New York* to that of 'The Golden Dome' in *Requiem for a Nun*? Has any 'sensitive' (a horrible word to the professional critic) reader on reading *Requiem* . . . had the feeling that great chunks of the book were written in the early '30's? Would any temerarious subscriber wish to point out that the Snopeses are not as villainous creatures as the pious members of the school of the 'New Criticism' try to make us believe they are for our edification and instruction?

"All of these are innocent and unweighty points and questions, and not worthy of professional consideration; but, nonetheless, I think that answering them could be fun. You may, of course, consider them trivial and exclude them, which will make no difference to me, for I shall continue to plunk down my two bucks to keep *Faulkner Studies* going. I approve of the project even if it is the editorial policy to devote it to the technical critic to the exclusion of the general reader. It is high time that Faulkner was taken seriously, and I shall continue contributing, financially, anyhow, to that project."

In his second letter, Mr. Jelstrup brings to a finer focus what seems to me the chief editorial problem of this quarterly. We were asked not to quote from Mr. Jelstrup's second letter but his statement of the problem is so clearly put that I cannot resist borrowing a few words:

"You are, on the one hand, attempting to stimulate interest in Faulkner; and, on the other hand, you do not want to alienate the critics who are interested in Faulkner already. You want to bring in the non-technical reader; you do not want to throw out the professional critic."

We agree. This is the problem. Thus far we have *tried* to steer a middle course as a general policy, printing material from professional and non-professional hands. Unfortunately, however, the contributions we have in our files do not always allow us as much balance as we desire. I hope that the articles and comments by professional critics have not "scared out" the layman. Let it be understood that we are anxious to have correspondence and contributions (on any level) from sincere readers. In the interests of Faulkner criticism, nevertheless, we will continue to print useful studies from the professional.

Also of interest this quarter were the comments from Walton Litz:

"The article on *Pylon* by John Marvin [*Faulkner Studies*, Vol. I, No. 2] brought to my mind an article by Faulkner, one of the rare cases in which he has criticized another writer. In a review of Jimmy Collins' *Test Pilot* ('Folklore of the Air,' *The American Mercury*, XXXVI, November 1935, pp. 370-72), Faulkner spoke of the 'folklore of the air' which should be written, in words which apply perfectly to the folklore that he himself created in *Pylon* and 'Death Drag.'

"It would be a folklore not of the age of speed nor of the



men who perform it, but of the speed itself, peopled not by anything human or even mortal but by the clever willful machines themselves carrying nothing that was born and will have to die or which can even suffer pain, moving without comprehensible purpose toward no discernible destination, producing a literature innocent of either love or hate and of course of pity or terror, and which would be the story of the final disappearance of life from the earth. I would watch them, the little puny mortals, vanishing against a vast and timeless void filled with the sound of incredible engines, within which furious meteors moving in no medium hurtled nowhere, neither pausing nor flagging, forever destroying themselves and one another.”

Mr. Litz, whose home is Little Rock, Arkansas, is now a Rhodes Scholar at Merton College, Oxford. There he is endeavoring to stimulate interest in Faulkner. His recent essay in *Southwest Review* is annotated in this issue. (J.R.B.)

## NEWS AND COMMENT

WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR, whose essay on *Sanctuary* opens this issue, should need no introduction to readers of *FS*. Mr. O'Connor is now at the University of Minnesota and in the not-too-distant future we hope to see a full-length Faulkner study from his constant research. H. RICHARD ARCHER is Supervising Bibliographer at the Clark Memorial Library in Los Angeles. BRADLEY T. PERRY, whose *University of Kansas City Review* bibliography is a *FS* basis, has broken down the bibliography "according to the specific works with which the essays deal" and has included "the more important newspaper and magazine reviews." Correspondents should write *FS* to indicate if they feel this breakdown should be included in the quarterly. Forthcoming will be Mr. Perry's genealogy of the Compson family and other genealogical research provided by WALTON LITZ. The "trial scene" in *Sanctuary* will receive additional attention in a coming reprint of an article by PETER LISCA originally published in *The Wisconsin Idea*. IRVING HOWE's *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* was received too late for review in this issue. The book, a Random House publication, will be discussed at length in the winter quarterly. Readers are invited to submit bibliographical annotations as well as short essays and correspondence for publication. All letters and contributions will be acknowledged immediately. (T.E.F.)

## Collecting Faulkner Today

H. RICHARD ARCHER

It might be of interest at this time to consider some of the problems encountered in collecting the works of William Faulkner now that his books are being read and studied by a larger reading public both here and abroad. In "The Ups & Downs of a Faulkner Collector" which appeared in the *Antiquarian Bookman* (Jan. 5, 1952, pp. 13-14), I related some of my experiences in gathering a personal library of Faulkner material before and after his literary reputation had been firmly established.

Naturally, it is not possible to offer established rules for collecting the many books and magazines which contain the writings produced by the famous chronicler of Mississippi who has been publishing numerous poems, stories and novels for over thirty years.

During the past twenty years I have been able to acquire all of the original editions (limited as well as trade) of books by Faulkner which have been issued in the United States from 1924 to the present date. The more difficult chore of locating and purchasing works printed abroad, which of course include the numerous reprints and critical articles appearing in the foreign journals, is a much greater task than one might at first expect.

As the voracious collector knows, the joy of the chase is often as exciting as the kill, and it may even match the thrill of acquiring the coveted prize. Although I have not been able to obtain a copy of each English edition of Faulkner's books, I have been fortunate in adding new titles with some regularity during the recent months. The co-operation of British antiquarian booksellers has aided this project immeasurably. Through their assistance the majority of English editions may be acquired for the collection in the near future. The problem of finding foreign translations, especially those printed in France, Germany, Italy and the Scandinavian countries, is not so easily solved. The quest for items printed before and during World War II has not been especially fruitful, although a few editions from these countries have been acquired since Faulkner received the Nobel Prize. For instance, the Crosby Continental Edition of *Sanctuary* (in English) published in Paris as number three of this paper-bound series, is an uncommon edition, and yet an English dealer supplied a copy recently for fifteen shillings. Daniel's useful, though not entirely accurate, *Catalogue* records only the 1933



printing of this edition, but the copy at hand reads 1932 on the title page as well as in the colophon where "March 1932" is given.

Many post-war editions of Faulkner's writings in translation are generally more readily available. A German translation of *Pylon*, *Wendemarke*, printed in Hamburg [1951]; the Japanese publication of *Knight's Gambit* [1950]; and the paper-bound *Wild Palms* (one of the Zephyr Books) done in Stockholm [1947] printed in English "Not to be introduced into the British Empire or the U.S.A." are examples of some of these. The South American editions of the Spanish translations and the Gallimard publications from Paris, which are in French, are fairly easy to obtain, provided the collector has made arrangements with an alert agent to supply the volumes as they are issued in each country. Recently received in one shipment were seven of the Gallimard editions, with the yellow bands around them reading *Prix Nobel*. A week later, a local bookseller supplied three Spanish editions from South America.

Some readers may question the purpose and usefulness of acquiring foreign translations and miscellaneous non-American printings of Faulkner's writings that are published outside of the author's native country. To the serious students of Faulkner as well as to the thorough collector these are necessary and essential. They often have valuable critical introductions which offer analytical comments and pertinent appraisals written by foreign literary figures who are sometimes more discerning than many of the American critics. For anyone who is studying a contemporary author seriously in an effort to relate his writings to the time in which he is living, the value of these diverse statements cannot be over-estimated. An evaluation of varied and contradictory appraisals by numerous critics is important to those who read Faulkner today, especially to any who want to understand the writer's position in the literary milieu of the mid-twentieth century. Such evaluations, interpretations and analyses, made by knowledgeable critics in many foreign countries, will help others to explore the meanings in the books written by the man who is now generally accepted as one of the most important creative writers in America.

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## Harvard Advocates . . .

A. M. I. FISKIN

In November, 1951, the Harvard *Advocate* published a Faulkner Edition. It is good that special issues appear, through the efforts of a university group, or some little magazine, or one of the well-known reviews.

Such collections are usually uneven, sometimes in merit, almost always in balance. The editor proposes wisely and well; unfortunately the contributors dispose. Each writes with his own over-all plan and purposes in mind. They can no other, and they would not if they could. It is, then, the first principle of editorial selection that the editor cannot select what he does not receive.

It is an impressive list of contributors: an even dozen plus Faulkner himself, and a cover by Waldo Pierce. When, however, the dozen are broken down, the difficulties of the editor become very clear. Thomas Mann and Albert Camus are included very impressively in the list on the cover. Unfortunately, both their "contributions" are included in full on one page, still leaving ample white space. They both express themselves admirers of Faulkner, but both extend regrets that they cannot respond to the invitation of the *Advocate*. Since their names are listed prominently as contributors, and since the price of the 44 page issue, \$1.00, is also listed prominently, one wonders if this might not be considered an unethical sales practice.

The reviewer might also be justified in omitting from consideration the long essay of Conrad Aiken's on "The Novel as Form" which had appeared before in *Atlantic Monthly*, and has been reprinted in Hoffman and Vickery.

This leaves Faulkner's own contribution, and nine essays.

Faulkner's contribution is also a reprint, although its earlier appearance had hardly had wide circulation; it was a speech delivered at the Oxford, Mississippi, High School commencement, and published in the Oxford *Eagle*. Largely a re-creation of his Nobel Prize speech, it does show a significant and interesting change from that famous pronouncement.

What threatens us today is fear. Not the atom bomb, nor even fear of it, because if the bomb fell on Oxford tonight, all it could do would be to kill us, which is nothing, since in doing that, it will have robbed itself of its only power over us: which is fear of it, the being afraid of it. Our danger is the forces in the world today which are trying to use man's fear to rob him of his individuality, his soul, trying to reduce him to an unthinking mass by fear and bribery . . .



Apart from the decidedly Faulknerian concept that crept into even a high school commencement address, this passage has other interest. The Fear is extended from a purely physical fear of the bomb to a spiritual fear that is far more embracing. But the rest of the passage leaves this reader in doubt whether Faulkner had any specific referents and what they might be if he had:

giving him free food which he has not earned, easy and valueless money which he has not worked for; the economies or ideologies or political systems, communist or socialist or democratic, whatever they wish to call themselves, the tyrants and the politicians, American or European or Asiatic, whatever they call themselves, who would reduce man to one obedient mass for their own aggrandisement and power, or because they themselves are baffled and afraid, afraid of, or incapable of believing in man's capacity for courage and endurance and sacrifice.

The statement is vague; time will perhaps clarify it.

The remaining articles might be divided into different kinds of groups. There are some that might simply be called impressions, and no matter how distinguished the author, the value of such an essay is comparatively slight. Pierre Emmanuel sees Faulkner as concerned with original sin, "Making the sons their father's father" and he explains Faulkner's use of time by this. While the concept is fruitful, the clue to Emmanuel's approach is in the last sentence of his short article: "It happens that those problems have been mine for the last fifteen years." John Crowe Ransom's article is frankly entitled "An Impression." It is perhaps worth while to quote a sentence that is almost a purple patch. "To read him is to contemplate the common human behaviors under the aspect of magnificence."

Despite their differences, three articles might be grouped together: Macleish's "Faulkner and the Responsibility of the Artist," Kazin's "Faulkner's Vision of Human Integrity," and Brooks' "Notes on Faulkner's *Light in August*." All three see Faulkner's concern with the artist's responsibilities. Macleish's thesis is now well known. "To be an artist a man must concern himself with the things of the human spirit, not only in their universal forms but in their actual, their human, agony." Faulkner qualifies.

Kazin sees a vast human implication of Faulkner's novels, and like some of the other essayists, sees the significance of the style. This is a very fruitful development, and incidently a very

considerable change from this writer's clouded memory of what Kazin had to say about Faulkner's style in "On Native Ground." That was, of course, *many* years ago. Through this style, Faulkner attempts "to realize a continuity with all our genesis, our 'progenitors'. . . . *This* is why he needs these long successive parentheses, and parentheses within parentheses."

Cleanth Brooks' essay, admittedly "Notes," also shows an interest in the novels as carrying in their very essence the sense of tradition, here the "community" throughout these essays. Faulkner's history of the south is seen as more than regional writing. Yoknapatawpha County, we might say, is *his* community; it is the concept of community that is after all most important.

Carvel Collins' "A Note on *Sanctuary*" is in a group by itself. It is described as "shedding some interesting historical light on *Sanctuary*." It does that. Very rarely does any study on Faulkner today try to shed any historical light. There is much critical work to do, but so far as this writer knows, there is *all* the historical work.

Albert Guerard's "Examination of *Requiem for a Nun*" is most interesting. It seemed that he faced some reader problems very squarely, but space. . . .

Rather regretfully, I felt very disappointed in the articles by Leonard Doran and Jerome Gavin. These articles were part of the work of these men when they were students at Harvard. To try to show that Faulkner had observed the "classical unities of time and space," (I assume neo-classical was meant) seemed fruitless; to say that *Sound and the Fury* covered only three days was disingenuous. To talk of proposition, climax and denouement might be useful—until Doran located them in particular novels. The specific applications always seemed unsatisfactory. Of Mr. Gavin's essay, I fear, I can only say that it confused me. The fault is probably mine.

The group as a whole is disappointing. The array of names is impressive, but not as much emerged as one might have hoped. And so much was not considered. Camus, in his brief note, stated that he thought *Pylon* a masterpiece. It would have been nice to know why. I think *Abasalom*, *Absalom*! Faulkner's greatest novel. I do not expect everyone to agree with me, but no one seemed to be very interested in it. And what of the early short stories, a seldom considered aspect of Faulkner's work? These objections are perhaps unreasonable, but it is nice to hope.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

In an effort to present an exhaustive bibliography of Faulkner criticism, the editors have deemed it proper and necessary to use as the bases for such a compilation the available sources found in the following publications: *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*, edited by Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery; "Faulkner's Critics: A Selective Bibliography," by John L. Longley and Robert Daniel, (*Perspective*: 3:202-08, Autumn, 1950); "A Selected Bibliography of Critical Works on William Faulkner," by Bradley T. Perry, (*University of Kansas City Review*: 18:159-64, Winter, 1951).

Our bibliography columns will print first data on critical material which these base sources do *not* list. After this task is completed we will work back into the base sources themselves, the eventual aim being a complete bibliography of Faulkner criticism.

Alexander, Sidney, "The Nobel Prize Comes to Mississippi," *Commentary*, 12:176-180, Summer, 1951.

Faulkner is conscious of his abilities; nevertheless, he has no wish to assert them politically, and he is suspicious of such terms as "symbolism," since he lives concretely and writes in the same way. His attitude toward politics or the Negro question cannot be stated topically. He remains a lonely man whose "blinding insights" cannot be fully communicated except through his art. (*J.R.M.*)

Heilman, Robert B., "School for Girls," *The Sewanee Review*, 60:299-309, Spring, 1952. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun*.)

The narrative sections of *Requiem for a Nun* are justified, since the principal characters, Nancy and Temple, are representative of the whole Southern Tradition. Whether or not the dramatic sections are successful, it is a valuable experiment at a time when the drama is in a state of decay. Faulkner is now writing in a different vein. He is just as profound, but he has a new directness of communication. (*P.M.*)

Howe, Irving, "William Faulkner and the Negroes," *Commentary*, 12:359-368, October, 1951.

Faulkner's early work shows love for Negroes, but he does not yet treat the Negro rebel characters seriously. With *Light in August*, Faulkner's treatment shows the tragic racial split. Christmas rejects both his white and his Negro blood in an attempt to regain purity. Lucas Beauchamp of

*Intruder in the Dust* lives in himself, without making attempts at reconciliation; he is sufficient to himself. Faulkner has yet to present the Negro interpreter with the power as spokesman of a Gavin Stevens. (J.R.M.)

Litz, Walton, "William Faulkner's Moral Vision," *Southwest Review*, 37:200-209, Summer, 1952.

Yoknapatawpha County is a microcosm of southern history. An understanding of Faulkner's complex moral attitudes can only be reached through a consideration of his total creation. His rationale of man's role in history attains its fullest expression in *Go Down, Moses*. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Joyce's notion of epiphany, as found in *Stephen Hero*, is pertinent to Faulkner's method. As he expands and shapes the dramatic nucleus of a story Faulkner is attempting to define for himself and the reader the symbolic values implicit in it. (T.E.F.)

West, Anthony, "Requiem for a Dramatist," *The New Yorker*, 29:98-102, September 22, 1951. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun*.)

One's feelings about this concoction as the work of the one unchallengeable and unquestionable genius at present functioning at the full tide of his creative powers on the American literary scene cannot be very happy. If *Requiem* is a mere aberration at the outer fringe of the work of a major artist the puzzle remains: why has the genius who gave such reality and substance to Jefferson and the County populated it with people so brutishly and incredibly entangled? (T.E.F.)

Wagenkencht, Edward, *Cavalcade of the American Novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951. pp. 417-425, 551-552.

"Whatever may legitimately be urged against him [Faulkner], few competent critics can doubt that his is the most powerful imagination among contemporary novelists." After surveying Faulkner's career and commenting upon the subject matter and the implications of his novels, this critic-historian adds: "It is very unfortunate that a writer who thus reads the human drama should have been so often misunderstood in an age which has had such desperate need of just such a reading. But it is largely Faulkner's own fault, for he has been extremely eccentric in method and style—and often, too, in his choice of materials." The extensive bibliography which closes this volume contains a good listing of Faulkner materials. (L.J.D.)